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ABSTRACT

Two hundred and eleven American Indian students (106 males and 105 females) attending an off-reservation BIA elementary boarding school in a predominantly non-Indian community in the midwest were tested to examine the relationship between the congruence of students' perception of and preferences for dormitory aide pupil control behavior and students' positive attitudes toward dormitory aides, dormitory life, and classroom life. The Helsel & Willower Pupil Control Behavior Form, the Ideal Pupil Control Behavior Forms, and the Osgood Semantic Differential were used to measure students' attitudes. Students' statements about their dormitory aides indicated they preferred aide behavior which was more humanistic than what was perceived by students as actual dormitory aide pupil control behavior. Students tended to possess positive attitudes toward their aides when student preference for ideal aide behavior was consistent with students' perceptions of actual aide behavior. As the data indicated, students generally had positive attitudes toward the aides. Contributing considerably to this was the fact that girls in grades 6-8 possessed very positive attitudes toward their dormitory house mothers. The more custodial the dormitory aide pupil control behavior perceived by the student, the less positive the students' attitudes toward the dormitory aide. (NEC)

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AMERICAN INDIAN STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF ACTUAL AND IDEAL DORMITORY AIDE PUPIL CONTROL BEHAVIOR, AND STUDENTS' ATTITUDES REGARDING THEIR DORMITORY AIDES

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AMERICAN INDIAN STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF ACTUAL AND IDEAL DORMITORY AIDE PUPIL CONTROL BEHAVIOR, AND STUDENTS' ATTITUDES REGARDING THEIR DORMITORY AIDES

In an effort by American Indians in recent years to participate more extensively in the education of their children, it is important to note that historically they have filled many of the lower level education positions within the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA). This has been particularly evident in the off-reservation BIA boarding schools where many Indian children have been educated for approximately one hundred years.

One position which American Indians have continuously occupied is that of the boarding school dormitory aide. Although there is a need for Indians to occupy these positions in that they are in most cases, culturally qualified, there are problems associated with the Indian aide's lack of academic and professional training required to deal effectively with the wide range of needs among the children. Due to dormitory aides' lack of formal education and the demands for the control of students with social and behavioral problems, it is not likely that aides will be concerned with long range effects of student behavior.[1] As a result, aides have sometimes had unfavorable influences on students which have caused numerous problems. On the other hand, one can expect numerous problems to occur when the

performance of major tasks by dormitory aides involve (1) cleaning, (2) counseling, (3) disciplining, (4) record keeping, (5) performing errands, and (6) supervising.[2] The mixture of these tasks probably will not promote positive attitudes between the child and adult especially in light of the high ratio of students-to-dormitory aides which is usually 75-1.

Another problem with the dormitory aide has been the low status the position holds in the organizational hierarchy of the school and of the entire BIA. Aides have no power to effect changes that may be constructive and beneficial for themselves or the students.[3] Stated earlier, the dormitory aide has often been referred to as one filled with stress because of the wide range of responsibilities they have for the students. One possible solution to this condition is to enhance the experiences of the aides and of the children through a more positive child-adult interaction.

Off-reservation Boarding Schools have often been referred to as "dumping grounds" for Indian children since a very large percentage of those who are enrolled are there due to social problems and to a lesser degree, educational deficits.

The Problem and Hypotheses

This investigator examined the relationship between the congruence of students' perceptions of and preferences for dormitory aide pupil control behavior, and students' positive

attitudes toward dormitory aides, dormitory life, and classroom life. Students who perceived their actual dormitory aide pupil control behavior to approximate their preferences for ideal dormitory aide pupil control behavior were expected to have positive attitudes toward their dormitory aide, dormitory life, and classroom life.

Conversely, if students perceived their dormitory aide to exhibit actual pupil control behavior which was incongruent with the students' conception of ideal pupil control behavior, it was expected that student attitudes toward the dormitory aide, dormitory life, and classroom life would be negative. The greater the discrepancy between the actual and ideal pupil control behavior, the more students were expected to exhibit a negative attitude toward dormitory aides, dormitory life, and classroom life. It was also expected that attitudes toward the dormitory setting would be correlated with attitudes toward the classroom setting.

Thus, the following hypotheses were employed to guide the study:

H-1. There will be a direct realtionship between the congruence of pupils' perceptions of and preferences for dormitory aide pupil control behavior and pupils' positive attitudes toward dormitory aides.

H-2. There will be a direct relationship between the congruence of pupils' perceptions of and preferences for dormitory aide pupil control behavior and pupils' positive attitudes toward dormitory life.

H-3. There will be a direct relationship between the congruence of pupils' perceptions of and preferences for dormitory aide pupil control behavior and pupils' positive attitudes toward classroom life.

H-4. There will be a direct realtionship between pupils' attitudes toward dormitory life and their attitudes toward classroom life.

Methodology

Two hundred and eleven students (106 males and 105 females) in one American Indian off-reservation BIA boarding school were tested using three instruments. The Pupil Control Behavior (PCB) Form, developed by Helsel & Willower,[4] was used to tap the "real" or "actual" dormitory aide pupil control behavior, and the Ideal Pupil Control Behavior (IPCB) Form was used to tap the "ideal" aides' control behavior as perceived by students in both instances. Students' perceptions of aides' PCB and IPCB were measured on a humanistic-custodial continuum. The theoretical range for both the 20-item measures is from 20-100, low scores indicating humanistic perceptions or preferences and high scores reflecting custodial perceptions and preferences. The third basic instrument used was the Semantic Differential (SD) developed by Osgood, et al. The SD is used to measure the connotative meaning of concepts as points in what they postulated as a semantic space.[5] The scales were used to measure students' attitudes toward dormitory aides, dormitory life, and classroom life. Each of the three SD concepts were measured using four bi-polar adjective pairs, each with a

five-point scale. The SD data were analyzed on a positive-negative continuum with a theoretical range of each scale from 4-20, low scores indicating positive attitudes and high scores indicating negative attitudes.

Because some students had more than one dormitory aide over any period of time, these students were required to respond twice to the PCB Form and the SD for "My Dormitory Aide." Due to the manner in which students were assigned dormitory aides, this study required that two groups be formed from the total sample. Group I consisted of girls in grades six through eight (N=88) who were assigned a dormitory aide for the entire school year. Group II (N=123) consisted of boys in grades five through eight and girls in grade five. Students in Group II were assigned different dormitory aides throughout the school year. Therefore, in students' responses to the PCB and IPCB Forms, and the three SD's, Group I students had one aide as a referent and Group II students had two aides as referents.

An eleven-item questionnaire was also used in an effort to obtain additional information concerning this study. Basically, the data generated from this questionnaire were used to assist in explaining the PCB, IPCB, and SD data. Information obtained concerned such things as students' feelings about their peers and about adults in the boarding school.

Hypotheses 1, 2, and 3 were tested using the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient (Pearson r) as the

statistical procedure in analyzing the relationships between the variables. As a result of establishing two groups, the test for each of the first three hypotheses required three procedures. One test was required for Group I and two tests were required for Group II. Two tests were computed for Group II because those students were administered two PCB Forms. For each PCB Form there was a difference score calculated. Therefore, difference score$_1$ was calculated by computing the difference between PCB$_1$ and IPCB, and difference score$_2$ was calculated by computing the difference between PCB$_2$ and IPCB. Scores computed for difference score$_1$ were referred to as subsample I of Group II and scores computed for difference score$_2$ were referred to as subsample II of Group II. The same procedures held for the two PCB Form scores and the two dormitory aide SD Forms. The fourth hypothesis which proposed a direct relationship between attitudes toward classroom life and dormitory life required one procedure in testing for a significant relationship. One test was required because no PCB data based on two administrations of an instrument were used in the test of this fourth hypothesis.

Three multiple regressions were employed to analyze the amount of variance contributed by the IPCB scores, PCB scores, and the difference score to each of the three criterion variables of attitudes toward classroom life, dormitory life, and dormitory aide.

In addition, a one-way analysis of variance was used to determine the difference in mean scores within the individual independent variables of grade, sex, and number of years student attended the school, on each of the dependent variables IPCB, PCB, difference score, dormitory life, classroom life, and dormitory aide.

The unit of analysis in this study was the individual student, N=211.

Findings

Three tests for each of the first three hypotheses were required. In testing each of the first three, Pearson correlation coefficients were calculated to determine the relationship between the difference score for students' PCB and IPCB, and measures of students' attitudes towards dormitory aides, dormitory life, and classroom life.

The correlation coefficient for the first hypothesis was found to be significant at the .01 level of confidence for both Group I and II. See Table I.

Table I

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ACTUAL-IDEAL BEHAVIOR CONGRUENCE AND STUDENT ATTITUDES TOWARD THEIR DORMITORY AIDE

Variables	DG	GROUP	r	r^2	p
My Dormitory Aide	86	1	.514	.264	.01
My Dormitory $Aide_1$	121	2	.487	.237	.01
My Dormitory $Aide_2$	121	2	.237	.056	.01

In all three tests, the data revealed that the more closely students' perceptions of actual dormitory aide behavior approximated that of students' statements about their dormitory aides' ideal behavior, the more positive were the students' attitudes toward their dormitory aide. All three tests of hypothesis one provided results that supported the hypothesis. The second and third hypotheses were rejected except in the case of data collected from one of the two subsamples in Group II which showed a direct relationship between the congruence of perceived and preferred PCB, and students' postive attitudes toward classroom life. The correlation coefficient for this subsample was found to be significant at the .01 level.

The fourth hypothesis stated a direct relationship between students' attitudes toward classroom life and dormitory life. The correlation (N=209) between these attitudes was found to be

significant at the .01 level. Therefore, hypothesis four could not be rejected. Additionally, the mean score of students' attitudes toward dormitory life and toward dormitory aide were found to be on the positive side of the SD scale. In this connection, it was reported by a school official that, in terms of behavior, the typical girl in Group I was socially better adjusted to the school in general than the average student in Group II - the group who had more than one dormitory aide throughout the school year. Students in Group I were less likely to run away from school or get involved in serious problems on or off campus than students in Group II.

Using a multiple regression analysis which was used to analyze the amount of variance contributed by the PCB scores, IPCB scores, and the difference score to each of the three criterion variables of attitudes toward classroom life, dormitory life, and dormitory aide, students' attitudes toward their dormitory aide were explained best by students' perceptions of aide PCB. Students' attitudes toward their dormitory life were explained best by students' preferences for ideal aide PCB. All were significant at the .01 level. Students' perceptions of aide PCB accounted for a significant amount of variance in attitudes toward dormitory aides.

This was not the case for students' attitudes toward dormitory life when the best predictor variable, IPCB, accounted

for smaller amounts of variance. In predicting students' attitudes toward dormitory aide and dormitory life, the second and third variables entered in the regression equation did not account for a large proportion of the overall variation.

In the regression equation involving student attitudes toward classroom life, the best predictor variable in Group I was students' preferences for ideal aide PCB. In Group II, subsample 1, students' perceptions of aide PCB was the best predictor. In subsample 2, the best predictor was the difference score between PCB_2 and IPCB.

The one-way analysis of variance was used to test statistically for significant differences in mean scores between individual independent variables and dependent variables taken separately. Means for the independent variables of sex, grade, and years the student attended the school were found to be statistically different when compared against the dependent variables of IPCB, PCB, PCB_2, attitudes toward dormitory life, attitudes toward classroom life, and attitudes toward dormitory aides.

Using the 11-item questionnaire in an effort to acquire additional information concerning the study, questions were asked of students as to who they would want to discuss personal problems with and other similar type questions. The results indicated that students preferred dormitory aides to other adults in the school when discussing personal problems. This was anticipated since earlier data indicated that students generally possessed

positive attitudes toward their dormitory aides. These data were analyzed using percentages, frequency distributions and a one-way analysis of variance.

Discussion

First it should be useful to review the nature of the samples used in this research since, in many cases, the findings of the study were based on three separate sets of data. All of the 211 student subjects used in the study were American Indians attending a federally-operated off-reservation elementary boarding school located in a predominantly non-Indian community in the midwest. A total of 14 dormitory aides supervised these students, of which 13 were Indian and one non-Indian. At the time of this investigation, 24 dormitory aides were employed by this school.

In this study, the mean IPCB scores were lower than the mean PCB scores for both groups of students. Students' statements about their dormitory aides indicated they preferred aide behavior which was more humanistic than what was perceived by students as actual dormitory aide pupil control behavior. The mean score for Group I students completing the IPCB Form was 50.51 while their mean PCB score was 56.74. Group II students' mean score on the IPCB Form was 57.06. Their mean score on the first PCB was 65.76, and 59.04 on the second PCB.

Although student attitudes toward dormitory aides were quite positive overall, there were variations between Group I and Group II mean scores. Group I students' attitudes toward dormitory life had a mean score of 7.77 while Group II students' attitudes toward their first (subsample I) dormitory aide had a less positive mean score of 9.70. Subsample II for Group II had a mean score of 8.36. Mean scores for students' attitudes toward classroom life and dormitory did not differ considerably. All scores ranged between 9.20 and 9.86.

In an overall analysis of the congruency between PCB and IPCB, and students' positive attitudes toward dormitory aides, dormitory life, and classroom life, this study reveals that there are significant relationships. Students tend to possess positive attitudes toward their aides when student preferences for ideal aide behavior is consistent with students' perceived aide behavior. As the data indicated, students generally have positive attitudes toward the aides. Contributing considerably to this is the fact that girls in grades six through eight (Group I) possess very positive attitudes toward their dormitory house mothers. These girls were assigned a house mother for the entire school year, an arrangement which can provide better opportunities in developing positive adult-child relationships. Apparently, the girl as well as the house mother perceived this association as one which was tolerant, trusting, and understanding of one another. The low mean PCB, IPCB and attitude scores reflected in Group I data are consistent with such an analysis.

Group II, on the other hand, were assigned dormitory aides inconsistent with the notion that an aide be responsible for a group of students over the entire school year. Thus, it was less likely that aide-child relationships would have the time or opportunity to develop meaningful associations. In addition, it seems rather clear that dormitory aides could very well develop distortions in attitudes toward caring for the boarding school children causing either rejection or overprotection of the children as well as inconsistencies in working with the children. As a result, the multiple mothering by a number of different aides could produce non-continuous, impersonal, or inconsistent relationships between the child and adult.

In any case, students' overall preferences are for a more humanistic controlling behavior than they perceive. The fact that student perceptions of dormitory aide PCB was the strongest predictor of students' attitudes toward dormitory aides is consistent with such a preference. The more custodial the dormitory aide pupil control behavior perceived by the student, the less positive the students' attitudes toward the dormitory aide.

The findings in this study which involved dormitory aides' IPCB and PCB are not always consistent with other studies involving PCB and IPCB data. This may be due to a number of factors, one of which involves the ethnic or socio-economic

background of the pupils. As reported earlier, the mean IPCB scores in this study were 50.51 for Group I, and 57.06 for Group II. The overall (N=211) IPCB score was 54.33. The PCB mean scores were 56.74 for Group I, and 65.76 and 59.04 for subsample I and subsample II, Group II, respectively. Sweeting, et al., reported 40.9 as the mean PCB for 954 inner-city Black fourth grade students. The mean IPCB score was 51.3.[6] The Forlenza study which involved 231 sixth grade students from middle-class families reported a mean PCB score of 52.6 and a mean IPCB score of 40.6.[7] Multhauf, et al., investigated teacher PCB and classroom robustness using a student sample of 803 students from the fourth grade through sixth grade. The mean PCB score reported in this sample was 52.4.[8]

The PCB scores for this study were more custodial than those found in the other studies. Overall, the mean IPCB scores were also higher or more custodial. The differences may result from the fact that this study involved dormitory aides while the other studies were concerned with teachers. In addition, this study involved an organizational structure different from a regular public school, and the students were not typical public school students.

FOOTNOTES

1. Carol J. Pierce Colfer, "Bureaucrats, Budgets, and the BIA: Segmentary Opposition in a Residential School," Human Organization, 34 (Summer, 1975), 152

2. Joseph D. Blanchard and Richard L. Warren, "Role Stress of Dormitory Aides at an Off-Reservation Boarding School," Human Organization, 34, (Spring, 1975), 44.

3. Blanchard and R.L. Warren, "Role Stress of Dormitory Aides at an Off-Reservation Boarding School," p. 42.

4. A. Ray Helsel and Donald J. Willower, "Toward Definition and Measurement of Pupil Control Behavior," Journal of Educational Administration, 12 (May, 1974), 114-123.

5. Charles E. Osgood, George J. Susi, and Percy H. Tannenbaum, The Measurement of Meaning (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1957), p. 20.

6. Lurleen M. Sweeting, Donald J. Willower, and A. Ray Helsel, "Teacher-Pupil Relationships: Black Students' Perceptions of Actual and Ideal Teacher/Pupil Control Behavior and Attitudes Toward Teacher," Urban Education, 13 (April, 1978), p. 77.

7. Vito Albert Forlenza, "The Relationship Between the Congruence of Students' Perceptions of Ideal and Actual Teacher Pupil Control Behavior and Reading Achievement," (unpublished D.Ed. dissertation, The Pennsylvania State University, 1977), pp. 54-55.

8. Arlene P. Multhauf, Donald J. Willower, and Joseph W. Licata, "Teacher Pupil Control Ideology and Behavoir and Classroom Environmental Robustness," a paper presented for the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Toronto, March, 1978, p. 5.